

Message Text

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12
ACTION EUR-12

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P R 150700Z MAR 75
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1311
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AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1766

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SP PO
SUBJ: SPANISH REACTION TO PORTUGUESE EVENTS

REF: MADRID 1703

SUMMARY: SPANISH MEDIA, POLOTICIANS, AND MAN-IN-THE STREET
CONTINUE TO FOLLOW CLOSELY REPORTS FROM PORTUGAL. SOME
COMMENTATORS AND POLITICIANS ARE ALREADY SAYING THAT
LEFTWARD DRIFT IN PORTUGUESE POLITICS CAN NO LONGER BE
STOPPED AND LESSON SHOULD BE DRAWN FOR SPAIN, NAMELY
ORGANIZE NON-COMMUNIST FORCES WITHOUT DELAY BEFORE IT IS
TOO LATE. COUNT OF BARCELONA IS QUOTED IN LOCAL PRESS AS
HAVING SAID IN SWITZERLAND THAT HE WAS NOT SEEKING EXILE AND
WOULD RETURN TO HIS RESIDENCE IN ESTORIL, PORTUGAL.
END SUMMARY.

1. PORTUGUESE EVENTS CONTINUE TO OCCUPY CENTER OF
ATTENTION IN SPANISH MEDIA. CORRESPONDENT ALBERTO MIGUES
FOR "YA" (INDEPENDENT) AND "LA VANGUARDIA" (INDEPENDENT)
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REPORTED FROM LISBON MAR 14 THAT MANY THEORIES WERE CIRCULATING IN

PORTUGAL INCLUDING ONE AMONG OBSERVERS HOSTILE TO REGIME WHO BELIEVE THAT COUP ATTEMPT WAS STAGED BY PCP AND ITS SATELLITES IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE RIGHTIST PARTIES. MIGUES, WHO ATTENDED PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY MINISTER OF INFO MAR 12, REPORTED THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE ATMOSPHERE OF INCREASING XENOPHOBIA TOWARDS ALLEGED "FOREIGN AGITATORS" SOME OF WHOM WERE ASSUMED TO BE AMONG FOREIGN PRESS CORPS IN LISBON.

2. COMMENTARY IN PRESS HAS UNIFORMLY EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT THAT COUP WAS SO INEPTLY PREPARED AND INEFFECTUALLY CARRIED OUT. ALL COMMENTATORS AGREE THAT SOLE BENEFICIARY HAS BEEN LEFTIST INFLUENCES IN AFM WHICH HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY "RADICALIZED". IN EFFORT TO EXPLAIN COUP EDITORIALIST IN "YA" MAR 13 SAID CLASSICAL QUESTION HAD TO BE ANSWERED "WHO BENEFITS MOST". ACCORDING TO WRITER, ANSWER IS THAT "SPINOLISM" FELL INTO CAREFULLY LAID TRAP. COMMENTATOR THEN ENUMERATES CONSEQUENCES: (A) END OF CONSULTATION BETWEEN PARTIES AND AFM ABOUT INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF MF. (B) END OF SEEMINGLY INCREASING INFLUENCE OF MODERATES IN AFM IN PAST WEEKS. (C) IMPLACABLE PURIFICATION OF RANKS IN ARMED FORCES. (C) COERCIVE ACTION AGAINST BANKING AND BUSINESS INTERESTS. FOLLOW-UP EDITORIAL MAR 14 IN "YA" SAID "MARXIST DRIFT" WAS STRENGTHENED BY ANTICIPATED SUBSTITUTION OF PPD PARTICIPATION IN GOVT BY MDP. COMMENTATOR SAID RADICAL MEMBERS OF AFM ARE COMPLETING "THEIR MANEUVER" BY GRADUAL ELIMINATION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND DEMOCRATIC CENTER FROM ANY FUTURE ASSEMBLY. SOCIALISTS TOO WERE OBVIOUSLY UNDER FIRE AND MIGHT ALSO BE ELIMINATED THEREBY PAVING WAY FOR PORTUGUESE "COPY" OF EAST EUROPEAN REGIMES. EDITORIALIST REMINDED READERS THAT COMMUNISM NEVER HAS TAKEN POWER THROUGH BALLOT BUT ONLY THROUGH FORCE.

3. SEPARATE EDITORIAL IN "INFORMACIONES" (INDEPENDENT) MARCH 12 SAID "REACTIONARY FORCES", BY CARRYING OUT ABORTIVE COUP, HAVE CLEARED TERRAIN FOR EXPLOITATION BY LEFTIST FORCES. "ABC" EDITORIAL MARCH 13 FOCUSES ATTENTION ON PROGRESSIVE INSTABILITY AND EROSION OF CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERNAL ORDER ON ALL SIDES IN PORTUGAL. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES POPULAR CONSULTATION BY BALLOT IS LIKELY TO BE CONDEMNED TO FAILURE OR A FALSE OUTCOME BECAUSE OF ABSENCE OF INDISPENSABLE PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE. "ABC" CONCLUDES THAT LESSON TO BE DRAWN IS FOLLOWING: "IT IS AN ILLUSION TO HOPE FOR EMERGENCE OF DEMOCRATIC STATE IF TOTALITARIAN MOVEMENTS SUCH AS COMMUNISM ARE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN PROCESS. PORTUGUESE WERE PAYING PRICE FOR HAVING DOCILELY

ACCEPTED A DICTATORIAL FORM EARLIER; THE LESSON IS PAINFUL BUT AT SAME TIME EXEMPLARY FOR MEN IN THE REST OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA".

4. SEPARATE EDITORIAL IN "YA" MAR 13 MADE SAME POINT ABOUT LESSON TO BE DRAWN IN SPAIN BY RECENT PORTUGUESE EVENTS BUT ADDED THAT CHOATIC SITUATION RESULTING FROM PROBLEMS OF SUCCESSION TO CAETANO IN PORTUGAL RESULTED FROM ABSENCE OF ORGANIZED POLITICAL FORCES OTHER THAN THOSE WHICH HAD EXPERIENCED IN CLANDESTINITY, I.E., COMMUNISTS. "INFORMACIONES" MAR 13 ALSO MAKES SAME POINT ABOUT NEED FOR SPANISH "TO MEDIATE" PORTUGUESE EVENTS AND TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TIME "TO ORGANIZE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL LIFE IN WHICH THE SOVERIGN PEOPLE AND ITS DECISIONS ARE NOT EXPOSED TO THE WILL OF EXTREMISM ON RIGHT OR LEFT WHICH ARE ONLY CAPABLE OF GOVERNING WITH THE HELP OF FORCE". EDITORIAL ASSERTS OUT THAT PCP HAS BEEN PLAYING GAME OF "INDISCRIMINATE AND SERVILE ADULATION OF ARMED FORCES" WHICH WAS SAME GAME PLAYED BY RIGHT FOR HALF A CENTURY IN PORTUGAL.

5. MEDIA REPORT THAT COUNT OF BARCELONA, WHO WAS IN PORTUGAL ON MAR 11, IS NOW IN SWITZERLAND AT BEDSIDE OF DYING BROTHER, DON JAIME DE BORBON, BUT HAS SAID THAT HE WOULD RETURN TO TAKE UP RESIDENCE AT ESTORIAL.

6. COMMENT: INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER COMMENTARY HAS ONCE AGAIN PICKED UP THEME THAT SPAIN SHOULD LOSE NO TIME IN ORGANIZING NON-EXTREMIST POLITICAL FORCES IN ANTICIPATION OF FRANCO SUCCESSION AS A RESULT OF THE IMPACT OF PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS. REGIME COMMENTATORS HAVE ONLY REFERRED TO LEFTWARD SWING IN RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL AND NOT DRAWN LESSON DESCRIBED BY INDEPENDENT

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PRESS. EMBASSY CONTACTS AMONG POLITICIANS LOYAL TO THE SYSTEM BUT WITH EYE ON FUTURE AND AMONG OPPOSITION SAY WITH INCREASING FERVOR THAT THERE IS NO TIME TO LOSE IN ORGANIZING FORCES IN CENTER AND RIGHT OF CENTER. THESE PEOPLE FEAR THAT FAR RIGHT WILL DRAW OPPOSITE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE RANKS IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PREVENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT CAPABLE OF COPING WITH POST-FRANCO SITUATION.
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